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General Subject

Organizing to Handle Surveys and Control

Specific Subject

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Centralized Organization at Regional Offices

Region Four

Ogden, Utah

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Advantages and Disadvantages of
CENTRALIZED ORGANIZATION AT REGIONAL OFFICES

Introduction

First we want to say that this discussion must of necessity be based on Region Four conditions. We do not know the extent to which the arguments we will propound are applicable in other areas and by the same token, we are not trying to sell our system as the final answer. Our system may very well be an interim, one which later may be more or less decentralized if time and additional experience indicates advantages.

Because of certain conditions peculiar to this region, it seemed best to set up a central survey and control organization. Some or all of these conditions will be found in other regions to a greater or lesser extent, but to explain the system properly we need to describe the conditions under which we operate. First, let us explain the regional land and organizational patterns as a background for what will follow.

Within the regional boundaries there are about 20 million acres of forest land, excluding pinyon-juniper, which need insect and disease protection. Approximately 80% of this acreage is national forest, 10% Department of Interior (mostly national park, but partly Indian lands), 5% state and 5% private.

Grand Teton and Bryce Canyon National Parks are inside the regional boundaries and both have been, and are, active in insect control work. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is working on a cooperative control project with the Ashley National Forest now. The states have not been strong for control but they are gradually becoming more interested in

protective measures. With the exception of one large timber company the private owners are mostly disinterested and passive spectators.

State lands are mostly scattered sections intermingled with national forest lands. The majority of the private timber lies along the fringes of the national forests, but in the case of Southwest Idaho, there is considerable intermingling of private and national forest lands. Because of the ownership pattern, the majority of our insect and disease problems lie on the national forests.

Timber species are Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, Engelmann spruce, true fir, aspen and western larch, listed in the order of largest acreage first, with a sprinkling of other commercial species such as Jeffrey pine and white pine, and considerable acreages of subalpine mixtures where alpine fir and limber and whitebark pine are major components of the stands. Some 1-2/3 million acres of timber land are inside primitive and wilderness areas.

For the most part, the country is not well roaded. The allowable cut for the region (national forest only) will probably be in the neighborhood of 700 million board feet when we complete our initial inventories. Last year we cut about half that amount. Only three of the eighteen national forests in the region are near to reaching their full allowable cuts. Others range downward to a low of about 5 percent.

Personnel-wise in the region we have a lot of good men but many of them have been trained specifically for range management work. By this we do not mean that they are not alert to timber problems, but it nevertheless stands to reason that abilities to recognize and evaluate insect and disease problems are not outstanding among a

sizeable number of our people.

The timber types in the region, while not complex, are spread over a huge area of broken terrain. The timber stands are primarily overmature, and as a result, are highly susceptible to insect and disease attack as history shows. A large area of the timber is inaccessible by road. Our protection strategy has been aimed at prompt detection of problem areas so that they can, if necessary, be treated when they are still small. The fact that we are at present treating several large infestations is not due to detection failures but to other factors which are not relevant to this discussion.

With that brief background to which we shall add further at intervals, the following case for centralized organization of survey and control forces can be unfolded.

The Case for Centralized Organization in Region Four

This subject will be approached from the standpoint of aerial detection, evaluation and control.

AERIAL DETECTION

Because of the access problem, aerial detection is the only feasible means of providing adequate primary detection services. We know we do not need to sell aerial detection here, but the effectiveness of aerial detection varies with timber types and destructive organisms as well as other factors. The value of aerial detection in Region Four can stand on the record. No infestations of any consequence have yet been missed on the areas covered by the aerial detection forces. In the station it has taken 10-12 years to build to almost complete annual coverage.

In setting up a regional detection organization, the first question we had to consider was whether or not to break down the smoothly functioning, strong centralized organization that the station developed or continue as is. If broken apart, the job could possibly be handled in one of two ways - as a forest job or by breaking the region into subunits and scattering the available forces and recruiting new men.

The first possibility was given little serious consideration we will admit. If handled on the forests the responsibility would more than likely have fallen on the TM staff people with some possible delegation to the ranger districts. The disadvantages to this system were readily apparent. Many forests have only part-time staff people. Adjustments in workloads and financing might be worked out, but even then the distribution of TM skills in the region is very uneven. A very difficult training situation would be developed. Flexibility of scheduling would have been lost. Perhaps the strongest point in favor of centralization is that the special abilities and attributes to do a good aerial detection job are not found often.

The possibility of dividing the region into subunits and having the primary detection job on each handled by a qualified entomologist was considered more seriously. This is the next subject on the agenda, and in order to keep from trespassing we shall say merely this - we discarded it because it lacked some of the important advantages of a centralized system.

We set up a centralized organization in the regional office for the following reasons:

1. Location. As you can see from the map, Ogden is in a fairly centralized location and therefore is ideally located to be the hub of the operation. Flying time to the furthest points is only about three hours. Progressive work is possible in most cases, cutting down on pure travel time.
2. Flexibility of operations. Flexibility is needed because of the unequal and varying workload by areas and to minimize down time due to weather changes.

Ordinarily we have excellent flying conditions at the time surveys are done. General storms encompassing the whole region are infrequent at that time, but local weather conditions often block us out of forests or groups of forests for a day, several days, or a week or more at a time. A centralized organization provides desirable flexibility in scheduling.

3. Equipment. Concentration of equipment provides for better equipment and also for more efficient use. A single contractor can provide better planes and servicing than several separate contractors, and use of radio and recording equipment is more efficient.
4. Manpower. Centralization allows the assignment of the best qualified personnel on a priority basis. By the same token, the opportunities for training and broadening of experience are increased.
5. Supervision. Centralization eases the burden of supervision and training. Mistakes and duplication of effort are at a minimum. Closer

contact makes communication easier and avoids misunderstandings.

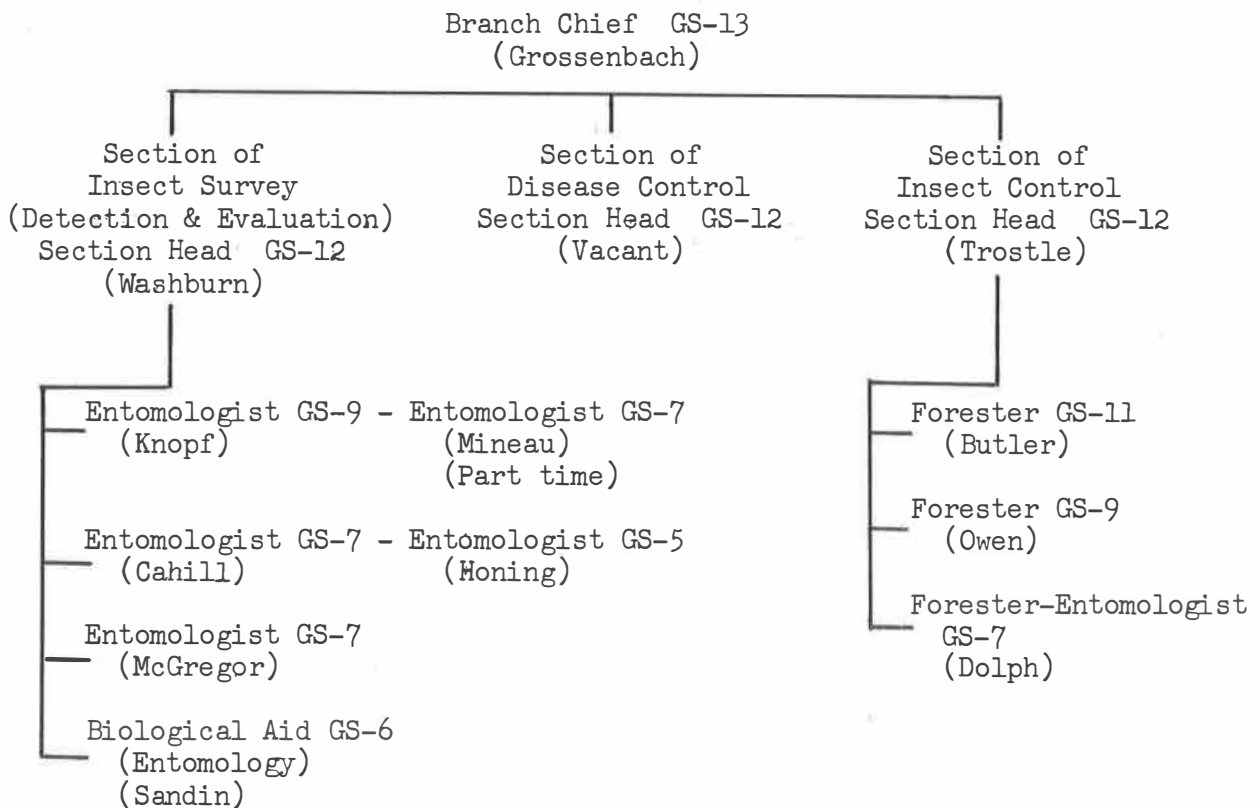
6. Coordination. Closer coordination is possible in a centralized organization between individuals and with control and research units as well as with other divisions.

EVALUATION.

Many of the advantages listed for centralized aerial detection apply as well to evaluation services but for the purposes of this discussion, it seemed best to separate them. Organizationally, of course, detection and evaluation are set up in the same section.

Before going on, it is timely now to present the organizational chart for the branch:

PROPOSED BRANCH OF FOREST INSECT & DISEASE CONTROL REGION 4



Washburn, Knopf, and Mineau constitute the "air force" and the others the "infantry." They work in detection-evaluation teams and as close together as possible, even to the point of maintaining radio contact which has been found highly desirable from the standpoint of efficiency.

A distinct advantage of the centralization of this work is that it facilitates "staff" participation in the analysis and interpretation of data. It provides the opportunity for more immediate supervisor evaluation of work being done, with the consequent advantage of strengthening performance promptly and with a minimum of lost effort.

Disadvantages.

Centralized detection and evaluation does have disadvantages but most can be overcome by good organization and liaisons with forest supervisors and district rangers. However, the specific problems are:

1. The national forest people and managers of other ownerships sometimes complain that they are not brought into the detection program enough. They may not be fully aware of what is going on with the result that they do not maintain enough interest and awareness of insect and disease problems. This can be overcome fairly well by keeping them informed about what is taking place and having the crew leaders contact field people before initiating work.
2. Training of field people in detection work is deficient. This is an area in which we already have plans made to increase training of national forest and cooperator people.

3. Because of deficient financing of staff people, multi-financing of primary TM staff people is common. If a share of the detection job could be carried by the TM staff, the problems connected with multifinancing could, in some cases, be overcome. This is a problem we expect to explore for solution at a later date. What impact this may have on a centralized organization, if any, is yet an unknown quantity.

CONTROL.

The centralized control organization was somewhat an outgrowth of necessity dictated by the heavy impact of control work in the region over the past three or four years. It used to be relatively easy to get a good administrative man for project work as a detailer, but times have changed. The impossibility of obtaining project supervisor type people on a detail basis necessitates the assignment of men to this job with full relief from other responsibilities. In order to maintain control for assignment as needed, we found it necessary to set up a "project staff" organization in the regional office. These people are "loaned" to the forests as needed to run projects or, as is the case with Dolph, to assume project biologist responsibilities while in training. This reservoir of project supervisors headquartered in Ogden has proven very useful and is well liked by the forest supervisors. As soon as the present heavy impact of control work is over, we may transfer both Butler and Owen to other assignments. However, we have quite a backlog of disease work on which they could be assigned. By having these men attached to the regional office, we can provide good project

leadership for two major projects simultaneously and maintain control for assignment changes as they become necessary. This lessens the impact on forest staff people and avoids disruption of normal work.

Disease Control.

We have had too little experience with disease work in the region. We need to discuss it here to tie it in with this "centralization" theme.

It appears logical that whatever aerial disease detection work needs to be done can be handled by the aerial insect detection crew with some training. It also becomes evident that the only logical place for a disease control man is in the regional office as a part of this "centralized" organization where his services can be spread about as needed.

Summary

I want to group the advantages mentioned above because so many of them apply to all phases of the work.

1. A centralized organizational design is most practical when the headquarters can be centrally located, preferably in the regional office.
2. Centralized organizations provide maximum flexibility for all phases of pest control work.
3. Most efficient use of equipment is possible with centralization. This can be broadened to take in laboratory equipment, library facilities, photo files, reference collections, drafting equipment and the like which under a centralized organization are readily available for use by all personnel.

4. Assignment of manpower on the basis of experience and other qualifications is more easily done with centralization.
5. Supervision and training are simplified with a centralized organization.
6. Better coordination is possible.
7. There is a further advantage in that there is an improvement of the "scientific climate" by facilitating the exchange of ideas.